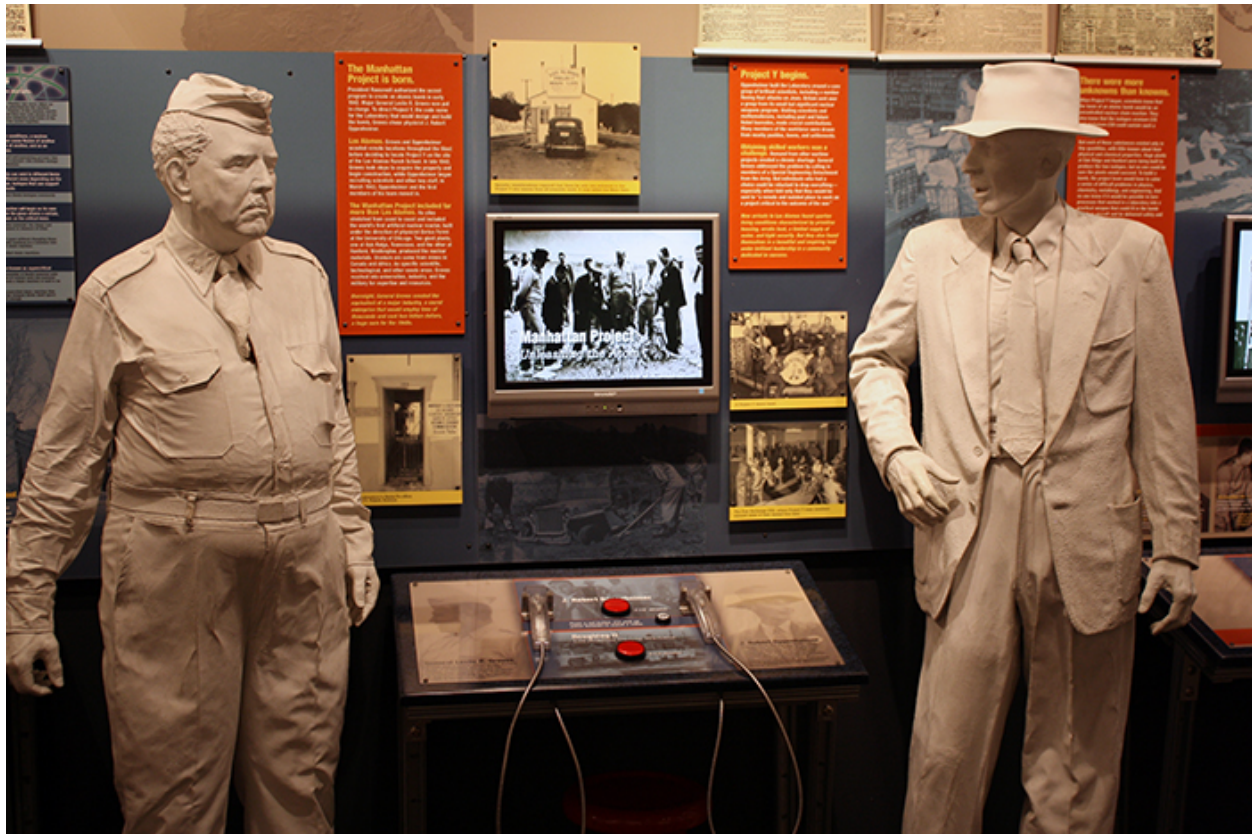


Oppenheimer and Groves never leave the Museum

October 1, 2016



We don't have a tremendous amount of documentation on the J. Robert Oppenheimer and Lieutenant General Leslie Groves Jr. figures in our history gallery. However, we are in possession of an October 21, 1982 memo that indicated that the Lab's director, Donald Kerr, approved the history wall design and directed a particular acquisition. That purchase was for the creation of the figures of Oppie (as he was often known) and Groves that still stand in our history gallery today.

The firm that produced them in such realistic detail was the only one doing this kind of quality work at the time. Named StudioEIS, the firm is still headed by brothers Elliot and Ivan Schwartz. It was fairly early in the company's existence when the statues were commissioned. Since that time StudioEIS has produced sculptures for an impressive range of projects including five presidential libraries.

According to Ivan, StudioEIS has now made more replicas of historical figures than any other firm in the United States. Its hundreds of statues are made from molds of living subjects and from photos and other materials of subjects from the more distant past.

Our records reveal the original cost for both figures was \$6,400. Adjusted for inflation, that amount would be the equivalent of about \$15,500 today. However, a recent email from Elliot Schwartz indicates that the cost to produce the sculptures today would be \$50,000 to \$60,000.

When we received the figures, the extensive installation instructions included the following notes:

"General Groves may need a shim under one of his heels. Just cut it out of Masonite or any suitable material and paint it white."

Though the figures have been touched MANY times in their 33-year history, they are holding up quite well. Provisions were included for any wear and tear:

"It is inevitable that there will be some cracking in the material due to handling. This is expected. After figure is installed take the piece of foam rubber supplied and dip it in the white paint. Blot the paint on carefully and fill in cracks. For all future touch up proceed the same way. On exposed skin surfaces use a thin layer of paint and blot carefully."

The instructions end with:

"We suggest rolling up something and putting it in Oppenheimer's hand and painting it white."

While Oppie's hand remains empty to this day, that hasn't seemed to dull people's interest in these iconic representations.

To learn more about how the studio produces its current work, [watch this short video](#).

To learn more about StudeoEIS, [visit the firm's website](#).



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